NA3
11:F71/3
C.2

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT LAND USE ANALYSIS

N. C.
Doc.
North Carolina State Library
Raleigh

FOREST CITY, NORTH CAROLINA

STANDARD TITLE PAGE FOR TECHNICAL REPORTS	1. Report No.	2. Govt. Accession No.	3. Recipient's Catalog No.

4. Title and Subtitle
Central Business District Land Use Analysis
Forest City, North Carolina

5. Report Date
May, 1973

6. Performing Organization Code

7. Author(s) Forest City Planning and Zoning Commission
(David Garriga, Planner)

8. Performing Organization Rept. No.

9. Performing Organization Name and Address
N.C. DEPT. NATURAL & ECONOMIC RESOURCES
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
P.O. BOX 27687 - RALEIGH, N.C. 27611

10. Project/Task/Work Unit No.

11. Contract/Grant No.
CPA-NC-04-20-1007

12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20410

13. Type of Report & Period Covered

14. Sponsoring Agency Code

15. Supplementary Notes

16. Abstracts
The purpose of this study is to analyze, evaluate and offer suggestions for improving the appearance, function and economic worth of the Central Business District of Forest City.

17. Key Words and Document Analysis. (a). Descriptors

17b. Identifiers/Open-Ended Terms

17c. COSATI Field/Group

18. Distribution Statement	19. Security Class (This Report)	21. No. of Pages
	UNCLASSIFIED	53
	20. Security Class. (This Page) UNCLASSIFIED	22. Price $3.00

Form CFSTI-35 (4-70)

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

LAND USE ANALYSIS

FOR

FOREST CITY, NORTH CAROLINA

MAY, 1973

The preparation of this report was financed in part through an urban planning grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, under the provisions of Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

https://archive.org/details/centralbusinessd1973fore

PREPARED FOR:

The Town of Forest City, North Carolina
F. I. Barber,Jr., Mayor
Albert Wiley, City Manager
Charles Butler, Assistant City Manager

Town Board of Commissioners
Stover Dunagan
Maxie Jolley
James O. Gibbs
Dr. James Byers
Milton Higdon

PREPARED BY:

Planning and Zoning Commission
Charles Z. Flack, Jr., Chairman
Mayfield Wood
Bill Blair Jenkins
Sammy Laying
Jack Wofford
Robert Watkins
Lynn Watson
Charles Butler, Secretary
Stover Dunagan, Ex Officio

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY:

State of North Carolina, Department of Natural and Economic Resources
Division of Community Services
Harold E. Strong, Administrator

Western Area Office, Asheville, North Carolina
Michael Geouge, Field Office Chief
David Garriga, Community Planner
Hermon Rector, Draftsman
Millie Wilson, Stenographer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW	3
CHAPTER II FOREST CITY CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	9
Activity Level	9
Site Characteristics	10
Use Categories	10
Building Use	16
Parking	18
CHAPTER III THE PLAN	23
Business Attitudes	23
Pedestrian Access and Circulation	23
Design Guidelines	25
Dead Spaces	31
Main Street	36
CHAPTER IV IMPLEMENTATION	40
APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE	48
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS	49

TABLES

Number		Page
1	POPULATION PROJECTIONS TO YEAR 1990	5
2	CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT FLOOR SPACE - 1973	13
3	FOREST CITY PARKING CHART	20

MAPS

1	REGIONAL TRADE AREA	8
2	STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS	14
3	USE CATEGORIES	15
4	CBD LONG RANGE POTENTIAL LAND USE	39

ILLUSTRATIONS*

1	INDICATOR OF RETAIL SALES VITALITY	6

*Illustrations 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are architectural renderings and are found on pages 26, 27, 28, 32, 33, and 34.

INTRODUCTION

Forest City is unique in its physical setting. It is one of three municipalities in Rutherford County almost within walking distance of each other. Forest City, Spindale and Rutherfordton are adjacent, with U. S. 74 and the Southern Railroad running through their corporate limits. Although these municipalities are economically and culturally related, each locality has maintained its own identity and individual characteristics. Forest City is the largest and fastest-growing town among these three largest municipalities in Rutherford County.

The urbanization process in Forest City, as in other towns, did not simply proceed in a linear fashion. That is, it did not simply increase its population and become physically larger. Other more subtle forms of growth are required of a town if it is to remain viable in an evolving society.

Towns advance through various stages; youth as Forest City experienced in the early 1800's, into the turn of the century; early maturity, when industrial expansion and railroad activity is at its peak; late maturity, its present stage, when fundamental changes in urban form are taking place.

These changes in the form and function of the town were prompted by a tremendous expansion of the transportation network which deprived distance of its quality as a barrier to trade, by a corresponding increase in the individual's propensity to travel greater distances, and by changes in society's attitude as to what constitutes an acceptable urban form and spatial structure.

The implications of this third stage of growth are both positive and negative. Positive because of the freedom it offers the individual to select

goods from and travel to a much greater area. Negative because of the urban sprawl and ecologically wasteful land use practices which often accompany dispersed growth patterns.

To remain competitive in this much more dynamic marketplace, the Town of Forest City has wisely decided to begin a Central Business District (CBD) study. The intent of this study is not to recreate the downtown as it existed in less competitive times, but to create the groundwork for an atmosphere, both physical and psychological, in which business and cultural activities can flourish. The Central Business District study is not an end in itself, but a means to the goal of an economically viable Forest City. This study is only an introduction to what should be a continuing emphasis on downtown improvement.

Of course, the most important aspect of this program is effectuation of the plans contained herein. Without implementation, the program is simply an exercise in futility. The plans contained herein must take into consideration the traditional problems confronting town government such as street maintenance, eduction, welfare, while many others have been added: the urban calamity of decay and obsolescence, failure to maintain population growth, financial bankruptcy, and the ubiquitous pollution of air, land, and water. In spite of increased federal and state recognition of the problems, the solutions must, as always, be initiated and implemented by the town government.

The revitalization plan presented here is not flexible. It outlines one set of alternatives which, based upon present conditions, are deemed most amiable to the growth of the town as a united entity. However, the citizens of Forest City are the final judges of what is best for the town.

CHAPTER I

REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Locational Considerations and Advertising

Forest City is fortunate in that its location allows ease of access to a large population. Highways U. S. 74 and 221A serve the town as well as the Southern Railroad. This centrality has been and will continue to be a primary reason for the existence of Forest City and many other cities and towns.

This location is, however, not without intrinsic problems. The proximity of Spindale and Rutherfordton immediately to the west provide competition on a regional level. In fact, the nearness of Forest City to two other competitive cities, combined with eradication of distance as a barrier to trade are among the primary reasons a Central Business District revitalization study is needed.

The suburban shopping center complex (TRI-CITY MALL) on the western outskirts of Forest City provides a degree of shopping satisfaction that persuades many people to forsake traditional downtown shopping.

The Regional Trade Area Map (Map 1) outlines the area from which Forest City businessmen can expect to draw the majority of convenience-goods shoppers. The primary focus on advertising should, therefore, be within this area. This is not to say any area lying outside the trade area should be ignored, not at all. As has been mentioned, the extensive use of the automobile has effectively eliminated, within reason, of course, distance as a primary factor in the selection of a place to shop. Whenever a concerted promotional campaign is initiated by Forest City merchants, advertising coverage should extend at least 25 miles. The media which would best fill the advertising needs of the

Central Business District are local newspapers. "The local newspaper is the communication medium that best serves to draw shoppers to downtown stores. The downtown merchant can help support the local press through his advertising expenditure. The quality of the local newspaper is quite important to its impact on downtown trade area size. The downtown merchant can help himself and the city by encouraging quality journalism."*

For the needs of the downtown merchants, advertising on local radio is preferable to television advertising. The impact of television lies mainly in brand name recall and not in specific place of sale. Thus, the viewer is more apt to remember the product rather than the store which sells it. The Central Business District merchants require a reversal of this recall priority. They want location of sale to have the greatest impact. Local radio advertising is better able to focus upon a specific trade area and can emphasize advantages of the downtown per se to the audience which is most likely to shop in the region.

The population growth of Forest City has surpassed the pace of increase shown in the county. During the decade of 1960-70, Forest City's population increase was 0.9 percent (from 6,556 to 7,179) as compared to a 0.5 percent increase for Rutherford County (from 45,091 to 47,337).

Forest City's importance as a population and economic center is exemplified when comparisons of projected populations are made of the three largest cities in Rutherford County as in the following table:

---

*D. Gordon Bennett and Charles R. Hayes, Downtown Shopper Characteristics and Media Coverage in North Carolina, (N. C. Department of Administration, State Planning Report, 112.08, 1970), p. 14.

TABLE 1

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

TO YEAR 1990

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Forest City	5,035	4,971	6,556	7,179	8,290	9,233
Rutherfordton	2,326	3,146	3,392	3,245	3,994	4,389
Spindale	3,952	3,891	4,082	3,848	4,276	4,445

Source: Division of Community Services, 1973.

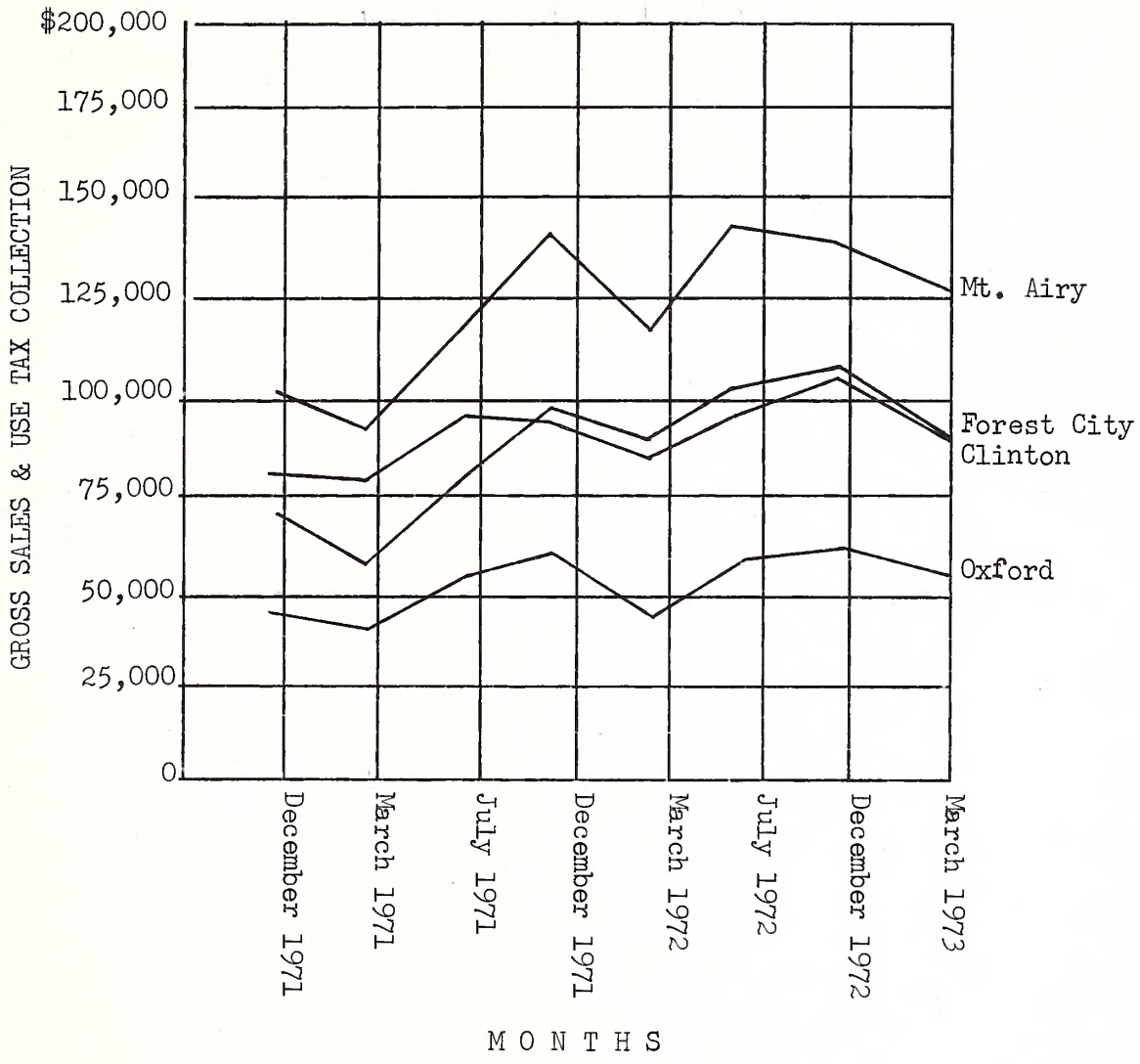
If present trends continue, Forest City will progressively increase in measurements of growth and its economic importance in the county will become a dominant factor in terms of employment, housing, recreation, and consumer consumption of goods.

These population increases are important to a municipality only if they are reflected by economic indicators. A reliable measure of retail trade vitality is the gross collection by municipalities of sales and use tax.

Illustration 1 depicts the trends of these collections for four North Carolina towns of similar size by population. The towns used are Mt. Airy (population 7,325), Clinton (population 7,157) Oxford (population 7,178) and Forest City (population 7,179). Figures are given for the period from December 1970 through March 1973.

ILLUSTRATION 1

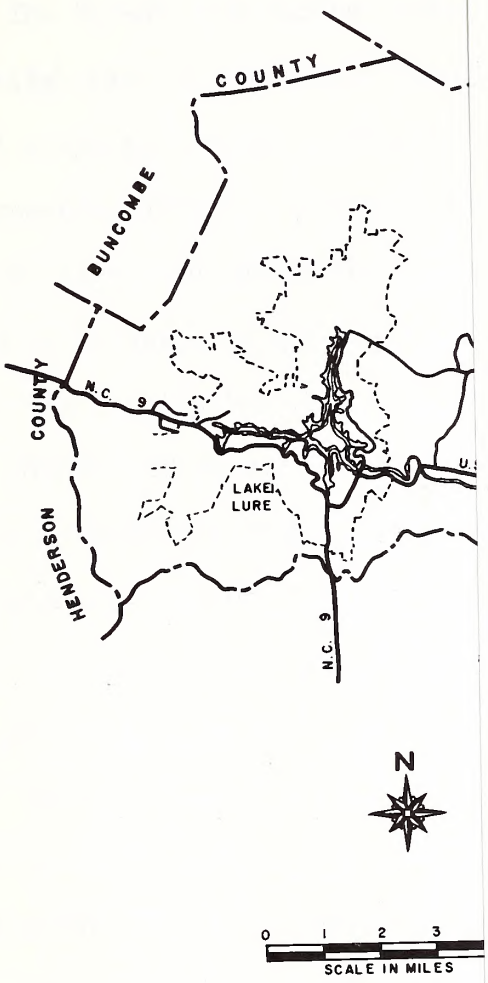
INDICATOR OF RETAIL SALES VITALITY



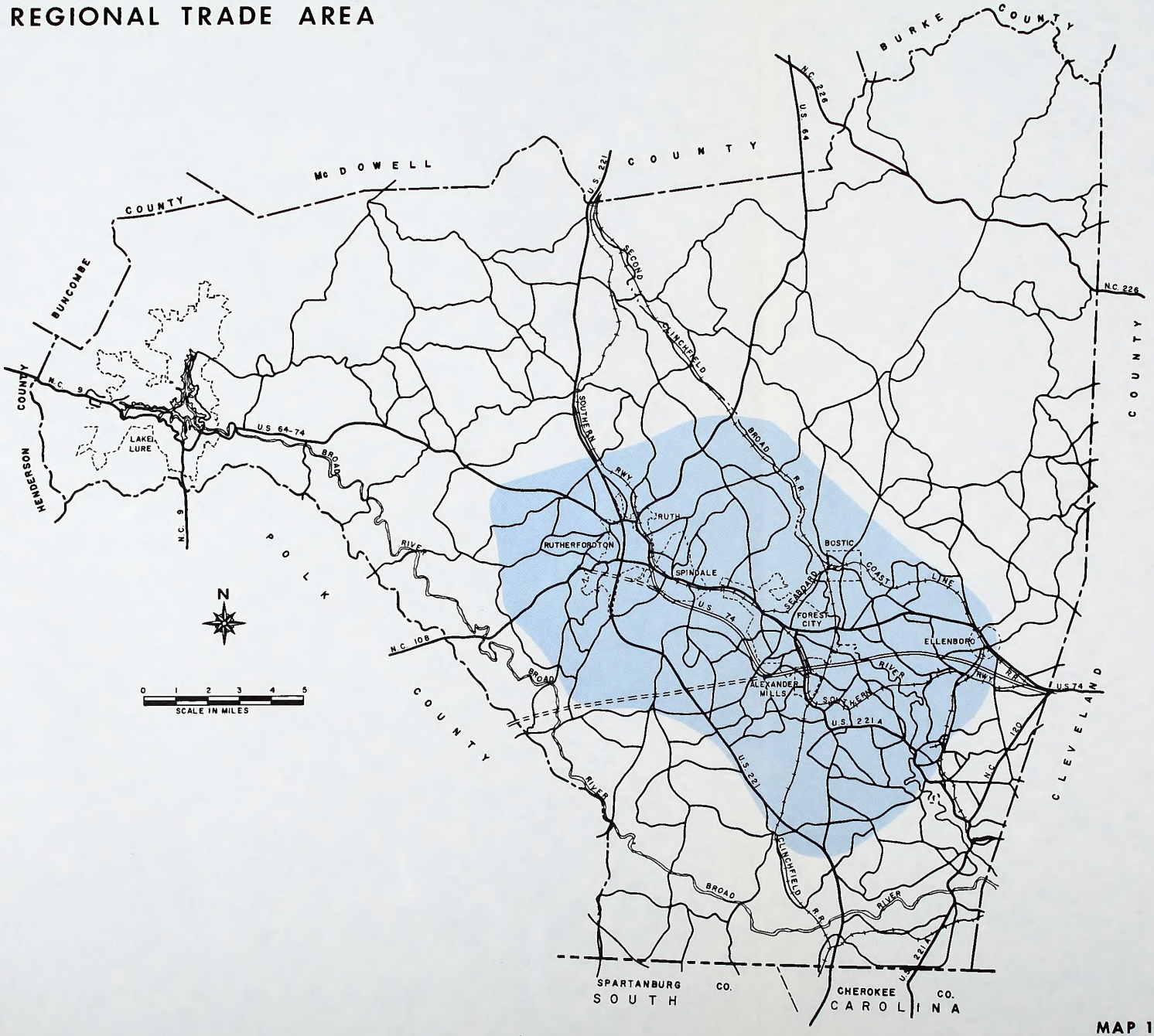
Source: Division of Community Services, 1973

As illustrated, Forest City fared on an almost even basis with Clinton in gross sales and use tax and substantially surpasses Oxford.

REGIONAL TRADE



REGIONAL TRADE AREA



MAP 1

CHAPTER II

FOREST CITY CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Activity Level

The Forest City central business district (CBD) is the most dynamic and vital part of the entire town. The CBD contains financial institutions, small shops and larger retailers, wholesale establishments, professional and governmental offices, personal service businesses and cultural facilities. The CBD is the hub of linear streets leading out to the residential neighborhoods of Forest City and its fringe areas. The central business district is truly the focal point of all activity in Forest City.

The CBD of Forest City developed, as did most towns, rather haphazardly. Streets, design and placement of various uses developed over a span of many years with no preconceived scheme. What is more, most development occurred before the widespread use of the automobile when narrow streets were sufficient and parking was no particular problem.

The most important factor in the vitality and growth of the central area of any town is the diversity of goods, services, and activities offered. This point cannot be overemphasized.

Unfortunately, Forest City does not fare very well as a diverse downtown. There is a shortage of movies, unique restaurants, sporting centers, and civic clubs in downtown Forest City. This is a very critical problem. A primary focus on this problem increases the awareness of the need for a downtown atmosphere wherein diversity might flourish.

If the core area functions as only a business-retail center, then the remainder of the town is left heartless. Cultural, recreational, and civic

activities play an important role in the overall vitality of a town and these activities should focus more on the CBD to fill the less active parts of the business week.

Site Characteristics

There are a number of methods used to determine the area that is encompassed in the central business district. This includes such criteria as: greatest concentration of traffic, and greatest intensity of sales to determine the limits of the central business district. After considering the above items, the central business district study area was delineated in the following Map 2.

The central business district of Forest City as used in this study is defined as an area bounded by Moody and Trade Streets on the north, to the south by rear lot lines of establishments along East and West Main Street, Huntley Street and alleys behind East Main Street. To the east, the borders are North and South Broadway Streets and the western boundaries are South Church and Yarboro Streets.

Use Categories

The detailed building use categories are defined as follows:

PRIMARY RETAIL - Primary retail shopping areas are generally located in the central business district or in the large regional shopping centers. These trade establishments sell low bulk comparison and specialty items. Primary retail establishments can be broken down into two categories: 1) stores which generate their own trade such as department stores and variety stores and 2) apparel shops, shoe stores, jewelry stores, and similar

establishments which are economically dependent upon the pedestrian traffic generators--department stores and variety stores--for supplying potential customers.

SECONDARY RETAIL - Secondary retail establishments usually sell "high bulk" items such as furniture, appliances, home furnishings, automobiles, farm equipment, hardware, lumber, building materials and similar goods. Merchandise in secondary trade establishments is relatively expensive and seldom purchased by the individual customer. Due to the expensive cost of secondary trade goods, the customer is generally willing to travel longer distances to compare merchandise between widely separated competing establishments. As a result, secondary retail establishments do not have to locate in close proximity to each other; instead, they often locate at independent locations along major streets or highways. In many instances, these establishments locate in areas which adjoin the central business district.

CONVENIENCE RETAIL - Convenience retail establishments merchandise goods commonly referred to as "convenience goods." They sell merchandise such as food, drugs, and gasoline which are purchased frequently. Establishments selling these goods generally serve a smaller market area than do either primary trade or secondary trade establishments. They are frequently located in outlying neighborhood shopping areas in order to be as near as possible to their customers. Food stores and gasoline stations generally do not prosper in the intensively developed core of the central business district since they require locations with convenient access.

ADMINISTRATIVE, FINANCIAL, AND ADVISORY SERVICES - Administrative, financial, and advisory services include offices or establishments performing either the management or administrative duties of government, business, and welfare agencies or providing monetary and professional services for the community. These include doctors' offices, lawyers' offices, accountants' offices, banks, the city hall, the post office and similar uses.

CONSUMER SERVICES - Consumer services include establishments providing services to the person. Establishments such as restaurants, barber shops, theaters, pool halls, hotels, newspaper offices, telephone offices, and similar uses are included.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES - Cultural and social services in the central business district include churches, libraries, and similar uses.

INDUSTRIAL SERVICES AND MANUFACTURING - Industrial service and manufacturing activities include all establishments engaged in manufacturing processes and all related industrial services.

WHOLESALE TRADE, REPAIR SERVICES, STORAGE - This category includes all wholesale activities, mechanical repair services and enclosed storage.

TRANSPORTATION - Transportation establishments provide for the conveyance of passengers and freight from place to place.

VACANT FLOOR SPACE - The vacant floor space category includes all buildings or portions of buildings which were not being devoted to any use. Floor space being used only on a part-time basis was considered as occupied floor space. All storage space, either passive or active, was considered as occupied floor space.

RESIDENTIAL - Structures of residential use located within the CBD.

TABLE 2

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

FLOOR SPACE - 1973

Type of Use	Square Feet of Floor Space	Percent of Total
Primary Trade	84,952	24.0
Secondary Trade	85,250	24.1
Convenience Trade	10,850	3.1
Consumer Services	27,725	7.8
Social & Cultural	6,250	1.8
Administrative Financial & Advisory	38,875	11.0
Manufacturing & Industrial Services	1,700	0.5
Residential	9,825	2.8
Wholesale & Storage	62,975	17.8
Vacant	24,000	6.7
Transportation	1,525	0.4
TOTAL	353,927	100%

Source: Division of Community Services, 1973.

FOR

50 25 0

FOREST CITY C.B.D.

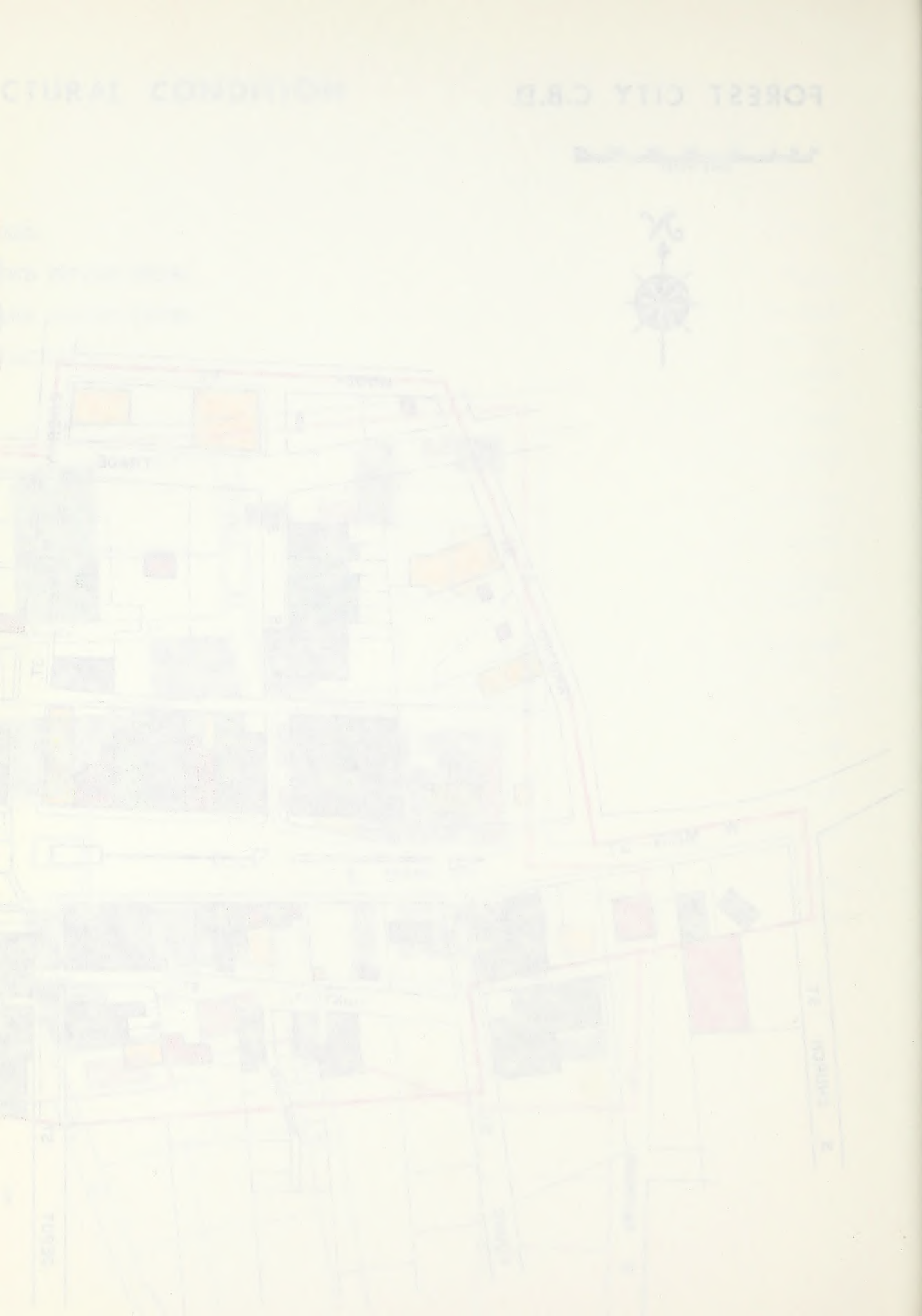
STRUCTURAL CONDITION

LEGEND

- SOUND
- MINOR REPAIRS NEEDED
- MAJOR REPAIRS NEEDED
- DILAPIDATED

MOODY ST.
TRADE ST.
CHERRY ST.
MARTIN ST.
POWELL ST.
N. BROADWAY ST.
McDANIEL ST.
ALLEY
BLANTON
TABORO ST.
THOMAS ST.
MTN. ST.
W. MAIN ST.
E. MAIN ST.
HUNTLEY ST.
ALLEY
S. CHURCH ST.
YOUNG ST.
DEPOT ST.
MILL ST.
POWELL ST.
S. BROADWAY ST.

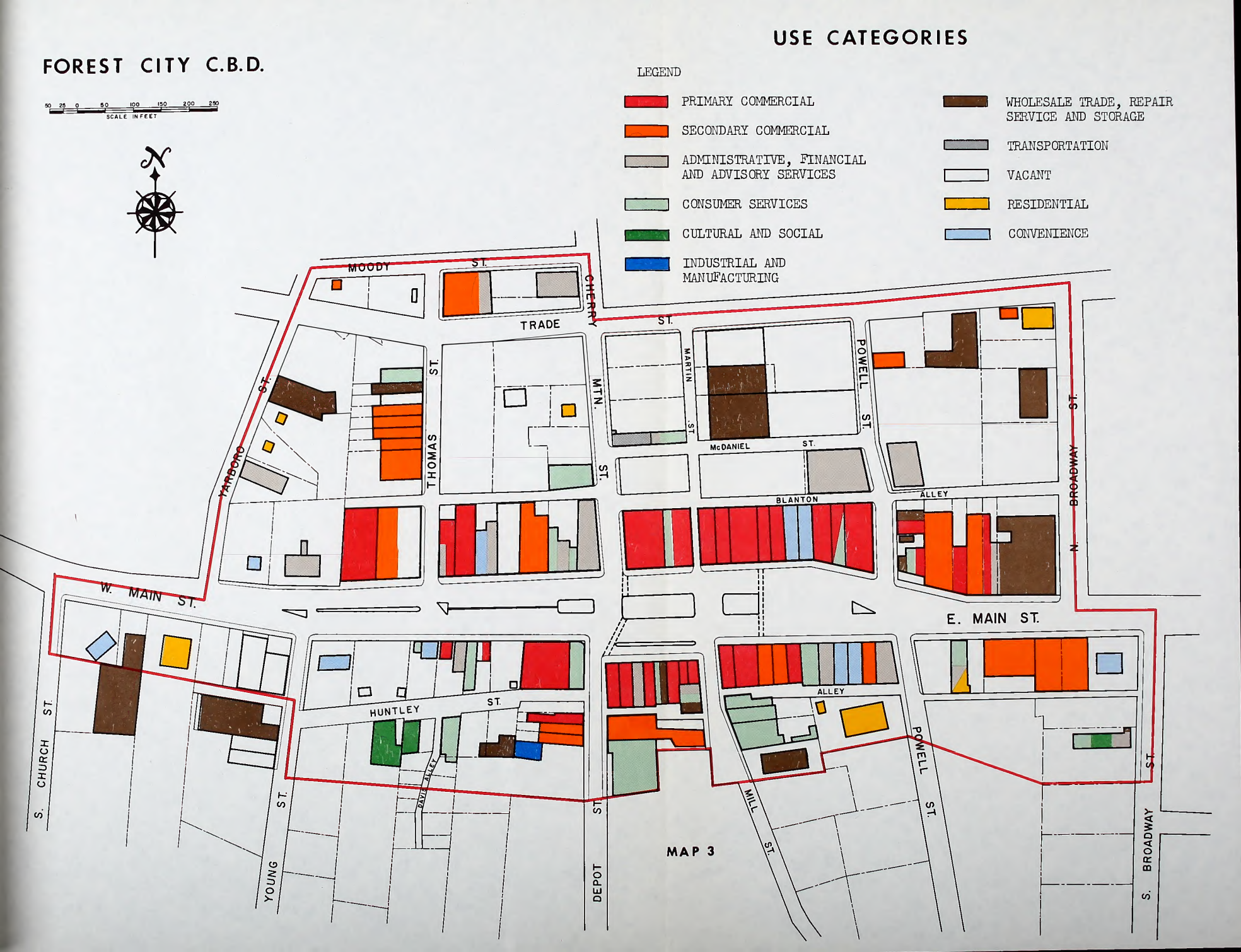
MAP 2



FOR

50 25 0

FOREST CITY C.B.D.



Building Use

The central business district of Forest City provides the primary functions of retail shopping, governmental services, office, wholesale trade, storage facilities, and parking to persons shopping or doing business in Forest City. In general, the uses that form these different functions tend to locate together within specific areas of the central business district. This can be readily seen on the accompanying building use map which divides the different building uses up into detailed categories. These detailed categories are defined earlier in this report.

The primary retail trade activities of the Forest City central business district are concentrated along Main Street, from Thomas Street to Broadway Street. Mixed in with these primary trade activities are establishments classified as convenience trade and others classified as consumer services. Uses within both of these classifications are scattered throughout the core area and are located in conjunction with other related uses rather than grouped together.

Secondary trade activities in Forest City sell relatively expensive high bulk items and are generally located throughout the CBD. These secondary activities, unlike other central business district activities are primarily automobile oriented rather than pedestrian oriented. In many cities throughout the nation such automobile oriented activities are tending to leave the downtown area and locate on major streets where they are more accessible. This could be the future trend in Forest City as its economy becomes more diverse.

Administrative, advisory and financial services are located in scattered concentrations along East and West Main, Yarboro, and Trade Streets, with no

particular area being dominated by such uses.

The only social, cultural or recreational activities existing in the Forest City CBD are a small pool hall on South Broadway Street, and a church on Huntley Street.

Wholesale trade, repair services and storage activities are in most cases located around the fringe areas of the designated central business district with several related uses located along East Main.

Transportation activities within Forest City are limited to only the bus station at the corner of Cherry Mountain and McDaniel Streets.

Consumer service establishments, located throughout the CBD, are in close contact with primary and secondary retail establishments along East and West Main Streets, Cherry Street, Thomas Street and Mill Street.

Convenience retail establishments such as service stations and drug-stores are primarily located along East and West Main Streets.

There are several vacant structures in the Forest City CBD with four large vacant structures in the block between South Church and Young Streets, two bordering Trade Street, one bordering Thomas Street and two on West Main Street.

The only structure in the CBD classified in the industrial and manu-facturing category is the Coca Cola Bottling Company located along Depot Street.

Residential structures within this study area are located primarily on the CBD fringe. Seven structures have been designated as dwelling units in the CBD. Only one such residence exists in the same building that is used for other land use purposes. This residence is located in the upstairs of

a building on East Main Street.

In order to obtain an estimate of shoppers' attitude toward the Forest City CBD, the Division of Community Services conducted a street interview. Approximately one-hundred people of all ages, sexes and ethnic groups were asked to give a rating to thirteen critical items about the Forest City central business district (see Appendix 1). There were also three "yes" or "no" questions and shoppers were asked to make any comments they wished about conditions of the downtown area. In brief, the average shopper made the following observations: 1) Off-street and on-street parking facilities were rated about average; 2) Traffic circulation was generally given a poor rating; 3) Street lighting was seen as good; 4) The exterior and interior appearance of the stores were given a better than average rating as were existing sidewalks; 5) The quality and selection of merchandise received a generally poor rating; 6) Store hours were rated well; 8) The worst ratings were given to entertainment and recreational facilities, eating establishments and cultural activities. (Almost no entertainment and recreational activities nor cultural activities exist.) 9) Forty-one percent of those interviewed did most of their shopping in downtown Forest City; 10) Eighty percent said that they would walk over a block from their parking space to their shopping destination; 11) Eighty percent felt that the central business district would benefit from area revitalization.

Parking

Unfortunately, many people believe that the solution of the downtown parking problem would mean the solution of all the problems facing the CBD. This is an erroneous view. First, parking is only one factor in the total

vitality of the business district. The creation of a distinctive, multiform CBD is the primary goal to be sought. Secondly, unlike many other towns and cities in North Carolina, Forest City does not suffer from a critical shortage of parking spaces.

At the present time, there are approximately 756 parking spaces in the central business district. These consist of:

Private: 17 Customer: 562 Public: 177

Several means of determining the amount of parking necessary for a shopping district are available. Those are usually expressed as ratios of parking space to total floor space. The following Table 3 uses such ratios in determining needed parking:

TABLE 3

FOREST CITY PARKING CHART

Category	Square Footage	Spaces/Sq.Ft.	Presently Needed Parking Spaces
All Commercial Trade	187,205	2/1000	374
Industrial, Manufacturing & Related	1,700	2/1000	3
Transportation	1,525	6/1000	7
Wholesale & Storage	62,975	$\frac{1}{4}$/1000	16
Administrative Financial & Advisory	38,875	1/1000	39
Consumer Services	27,725	1/1000	28
Social & Cultural	6,250	1/1000	6
	326,255		473

Number of parking spaces in CBD	756
Number of parking spaces needed in CBD	473
Surplus parking spaces in CBD	283

Source: Division of Community Services, 1973.

From Table 3 it can be seen that the Forest City CBD has a surplus of 283 parking spaces when the present parking situation is compared to floor area usage. This surplus is seldom realized by shoppers or employees in the CBD when the rush during peak traffic periods of the day arrives. This is because some off-street parking areas are underused. By utilizing the criteria of parking spaces per square foot of building usage, the Forest City CBD would need 94,600 square feet of parking to match that amount of downtown floor space. A standard parking space contains 200 square feet (20' x 10'); therefore, the core area would need 473 parking spaces. Again, since there are 756 spaces in the CBD, this criteria produces a surplus of 283 spaces. This number includes designated parking spaces and unimproved parking lots designated for customers by the Forest City Merchants Association. Square footage of unimproved lots was determined and 75% of these areas were designated for parking and 25% for access and turnaround area. The huge designated parking area on Young Street provided by the Merchants Association is inadequately used by shoppers or employees. Although its area was utilized by this report in determining the number of parking spaces in the CBD, its true value could only be realized if full use was derived. This parking lot is unimproved. It is unlevel in some areas, unpaved and unmarked. Contained here is enough area to provide 167 parking spaces. The Merchants Association parking lot on Depot Street adjacent to the Coca Cola Bottling Company is also underused and only partially improved. With proper improvement and marking, 57 parking spaces could be derived. Both of these parking lots are well located, requiring only a short walk by shoppers to most shopping facilities in the CBD. It is the recommendation of this study that all inadequately used

designated parking areas in the central town be paved, marked, and well lighted for use by shoppers and employees.

CHAPTER III

THE PLAN

Business Attitudes

It will make little difference whether the customer is brought swiftly to the center of town, his vehicle stored conveniently and he is then in a pleasant atmosphere, if the businesses, services and professionals within the area do not appreciate and compete for the customer's patronage. This, of course, applies more directly to department stores and shops that carry comparative goods and merchandise. Any major shopping facility whether it be one large department store or an entire shopping center that is attempting to attract a major portion of the sales in a given area must have a positive sales campaign. The downtown must generate activity by having sales that include the entire central area. A new business must try harder than an older more established one and by the same token old businesses often fall into a pattern of business habits that are possibly not as dynamic as they should be. Therefore, both new and established businesses must be aware of the pitfalls of developing a complacent attitude. The central area must be promoted as a unified group of merchants providing a total shopping facility.

This positive position must be reflected not only in the merchandise sold and the attitude of the merchant, it must also be demonstrated in the quality of the building benefiting merchants or by some combination of the two, but it must be provided.

Pedestrian Access and Circulation

The dependency of man on his automobile has both its good and bad aspects, but just the problem of the sheer numbers of vehicles is beginning to have

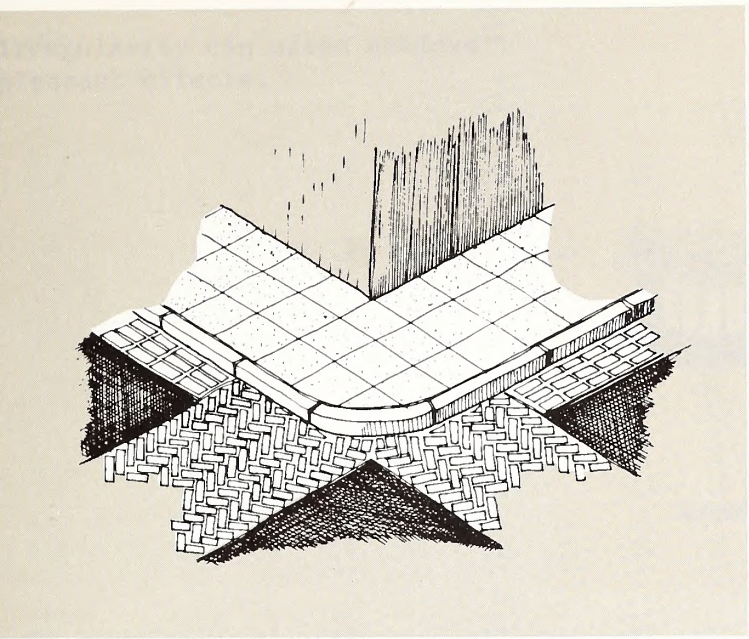
many undesirable side effects. The space required for the circulation and storage of automobiles has placed a strain on the available open properties within the downtown area and this strain is reflected in more and more effort being directed toward bigger, wider and straighter roads and streets, with every available square foot of vacant land being used for parking. This being the case, it is understandable that very little attention is being given the pedestrian shopper. From the time the walking customer leaves his automobile until he arrives at his destination he is in constant conflict with either the moving or parked car. Engineers expend great thought, and elaborate machines are used to produce better and more efficient methods of moving traffic, but only the minimum of space and accommodations are allowed for when dealing with the pedestrian. Ideally once the walking customer leaves his vehicle he should no longer have to compete with wheeled traffic. From his car the pedestrian should be able to walk easily through landscaped alleys or pedestrian accessways to the main shopping area. Once in the main shopping area the walking customer should be "king" within an area totally devoted to his needs and his scale. There should be areas for window shopping, for walking, for just standing about, areas with seats and benches for resting or waiting. And intermingled so as to become a part of the total scene there should be trees, fountains, pools, sculpture and landscaping in general as the situation requires. The area that is outside of the stores, shops and offices must be where the business is conducted. Updated merchandising methods will lose much of their effect if they are conducted within an outdated facility. The physical character of a place of business has a great influence on the customer's attitude toward shopping or not shopping.

Many owners of buildings could do a great deal to improve their appearance simply by removing items that have collected over a period of years. These could be signs, posters, unused lights, railing or any one of a dozen things. Usually the more simple a building is, the more successful it is visually. Paint is probably the simplest, least expensive and generally the most successful of all of the available renovation materials. With a little thought dynamic changes can be made both on the exterior and the interior. It also must be realized that while painting, and in general cleaning up and fixing up, will accomplish much it is not the ultimate in renovation and only through planning and coordination with professionals such as engineers, architects, and landscape architects can the best results be obtained.

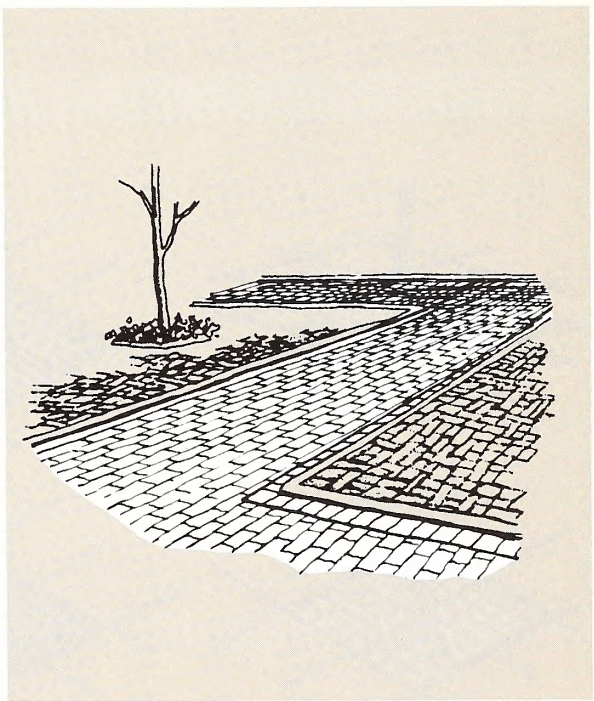
Design Guidelines

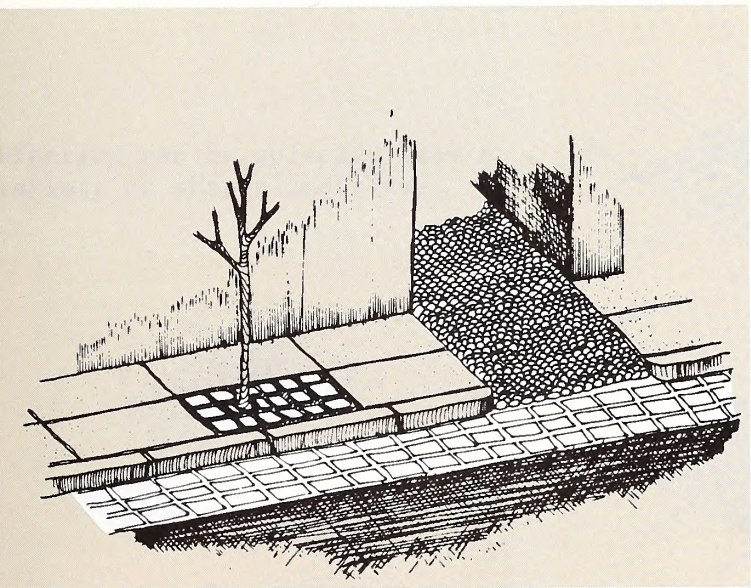
The following guidelines are subdivided into three sections: street and sidewalk improvements, paving materials, and plants and shrubbery. Again, let it be emphasized that these are only guidelines. They are intended to offer alternatives to the existing appearance of the CBD and to suggest areas of need. The majority of the buildings in the CBD are in sound physical condition, therefore, extensive renewal or rehabilitation is not warranted.

The examples presented within these guidelines are by no means the only available ones for consideration. The affected downtown merchants would be the final arbiters of questions of esthetics. It must also be emphasized that the implementation of these or other similar design guidelines would satisfy the demands made for short-range improvements to the CBD. The expenditure of time and money would be relatively small in order to achieve immediate results.



Attractive pavement construction is possible with brick and concrete.





Crosswalks and alleyways can be made interesting and attractive.

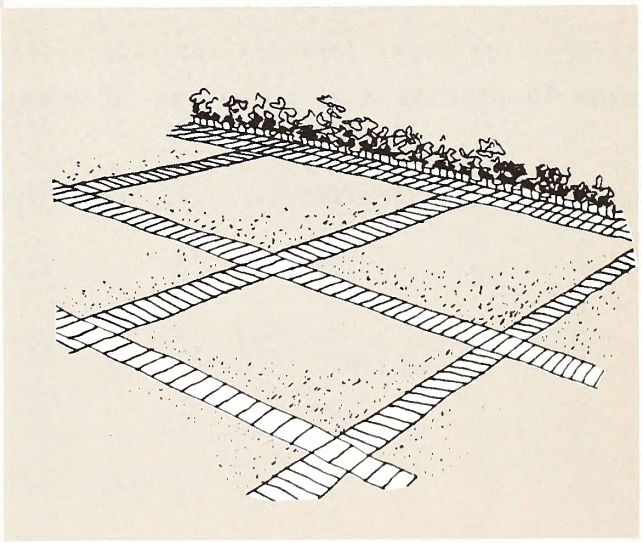
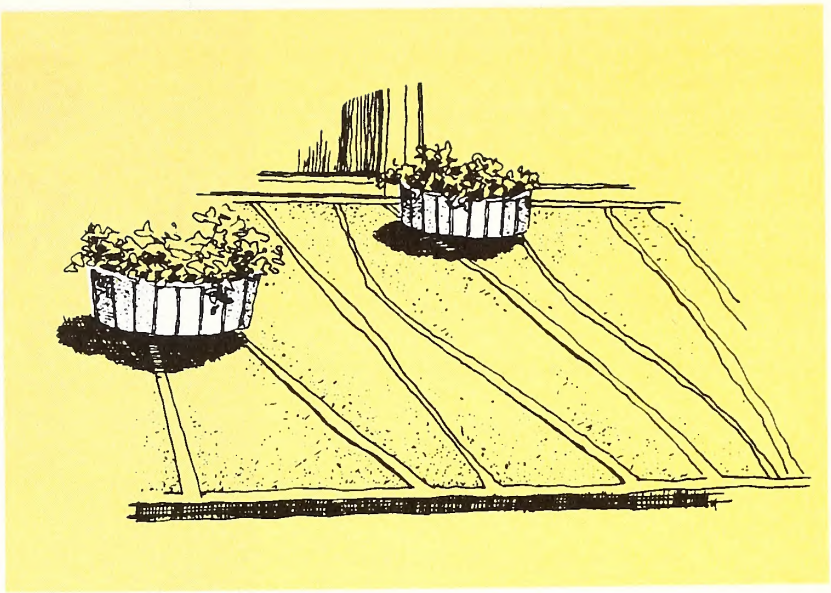
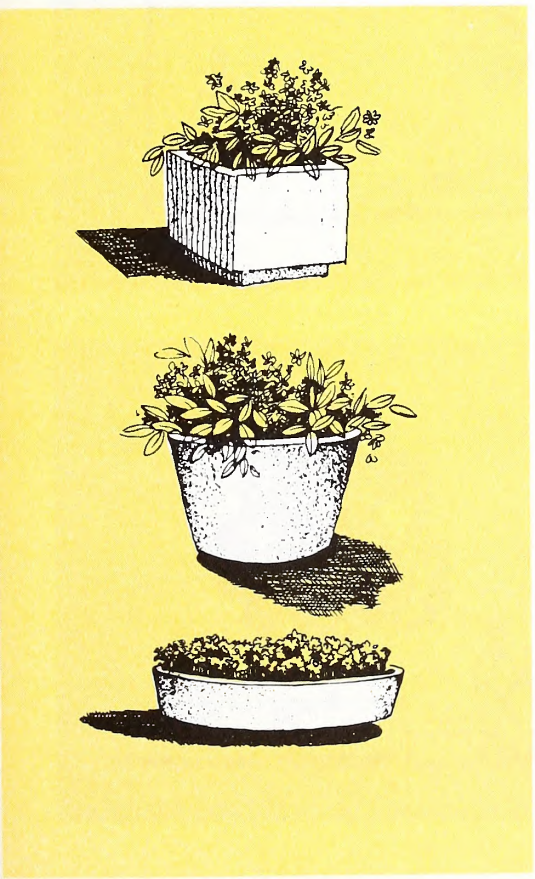


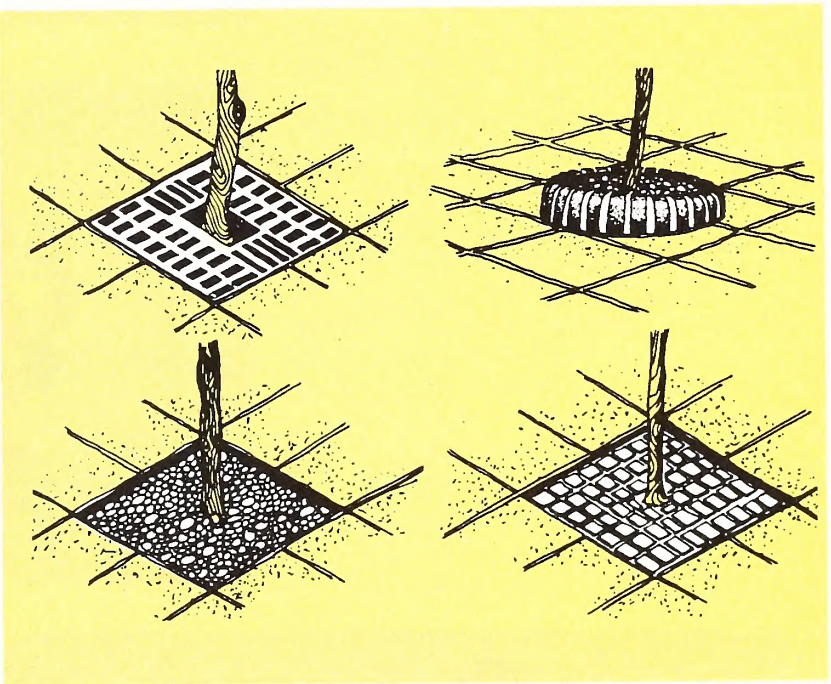
ILLUSTRATION 2

Irregularity can often achieve pleasant effects.

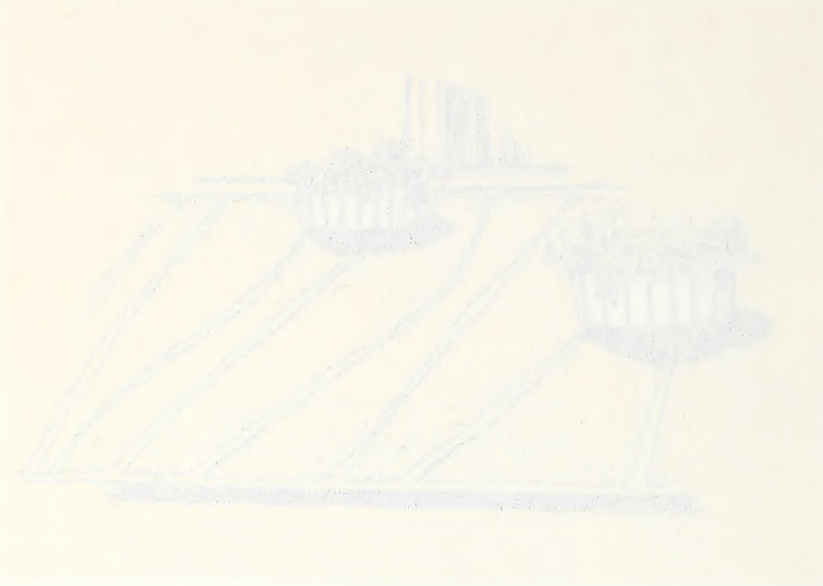


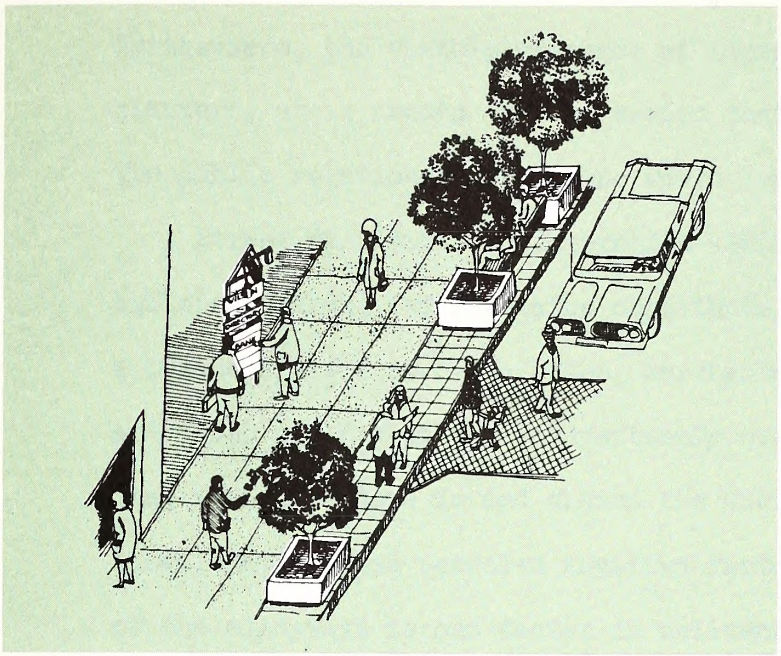
Planters can be selected from a variety of shapes and sizes.

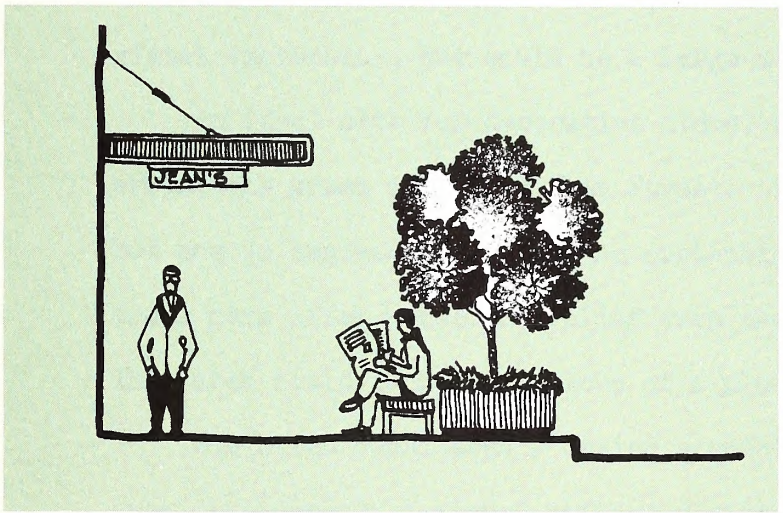




Small trees must be protected in a variety of ways.







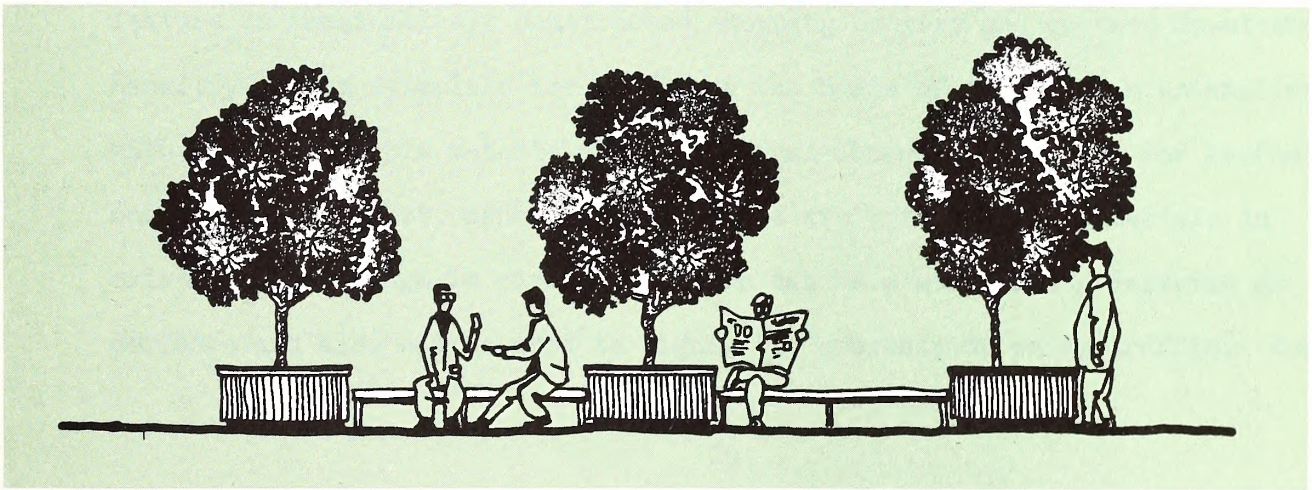


ILLUSTRATION 4

Furthermore, the visible presence of improvements such as street furniture, planters, etc., create the impression that long awaited work is about to begin. The public relations value alone would justify the expenditure.

Street furniture and decorative additions such as sculpture, novel bulletin boards, and fountains contribute significantly to the visual worth of a business district. Too often, merchants become accustomed to the gradual attrition of an area and inadvertently overlook the cluttered saturation that steadily grows in and around the CBD. Shoppers, being less frequent inhabitants, often perceive negative factors in the environment. Painting of the alleyways is one factor in enlivening the area. Likewise, the convenient placement of street furniture will not completely eradicate a poor visual impression, but would be a large step toward improvement.

An ideal site for decorative items, particularly a shade canopy, is around the green island on Main Street. The area is pleasantly landscaped but has no benches and offers no protection from weather elements. The shade trees here offer a welcome relief from the sun and hot summertime pavement. This area could form the nucleus of a pleasant downtown diversion.

Not often considered a design element in the earlier years of central area development, textured-patterned sidewalks are today an outstanding feature in imaginatively constructed shopping centers and renewed downtowns. Usually, paving materials are chosen on the basis of economy, an unfamiliarity with other available materials, or a general absence of concern for aesthetic considerations. Yet, asphalt and concrete are not the only materials in existence. A change in pavement pattern can be a wonderful pedestrian experience and also can be used to signal the presence of cross traffic. Such

a change can also be justified as a safety feature, for if properly placed it can alert the pedestrian to an alley crossing, intersection, etc.

Trees can also be a tremendously pleasing asset to a downtown area. Large broadleaf deciduous trees would not be appropriate in the CBD. They would not be suitable because they would severely impair visibility if placed near the railroad right of way. This could create a hazard to safe crossing of the tracks. Secondly, many of the streets in the CBD are narrow, effectively preventing pedestrian movement around large trees. This does not mean all trees should be banned. Many smaller varieties would be very well-suited to the climate and limited space conditions of downtown Forest City.

Among the smaller trees, several are recommended:

1. Ilex opaca fosteri. Foster's Holly. Height 18-20 feet. Spread, 6-8 feet. This is a very hardy, handsome tree. It is pyramidal shaped with evergreen foliage. The evergreen is particularly welcome.

2. Lagerstromia indica. Crepe Myrtle. Height 20-30 feet. Spread, 10-15 feet. This handsome small tree has dull green foliage appearing in the spring and turns to a burnished copper in the fall. Throughout the summer, upright clusters of flowers (pink, red, and white) create a profusion of color. The sculpture-like appearance of the trunk and bark makes the crepe myrtle interesting all year, even in winter when the leaves are gone. The crepe myrtle is reasonably fast growing, relatively free from disease and is longlived.

3. Prumua caroliniana. Carolina Cherry Laurel. Height, 20-30 feet. Spread, 15-20 feet. This beautiful small tree has the advantage of being an evergreen. The lustrous dark foliage forms a small symmetrical tree with a heavy round crown. Numerous small white flowers form in the spring and black berrylike fruits develop later. The cherry laurel is relatively free of insects and diseases.

The guidelines presented are of little value if some form of them are not translated into tangible reality. Often, the experience of other towns confronted with similar problems is helpful in providing a frame of reference.

Dead Spaces

The core area is the most intensively used section of Forest City. The density of building is greatest, the number of people coming to the area is high, and the valuation of property is highest. However, intensity of usage does not always indicate optimum use of land resources. There are many areas within the downtown, particularly the areas behind the storefronts and on vacant lots, that are not used to the greatest overall advantage. In fact, these dead spaces are the greatest detriment to the existence of a pleasant shopping atmosphere in the core area. Furthermore, the haphazard manner of parking on rear lots effectively prohibits additions to the total number of available parking spaces.

Rehabilitation and planned redesign of these dead spaces would significantly contribute to the achievement of three major improvement goals: 1) extend the range and number of commercial, cultural, and recreational functions of the downtown; 2) creation of an improved shopping atmosphere; and 3) improvement in parking facilities.

The accompanying photographs offer views of present conditions in the rear lots. There is no acceptable reason for the clutter which now mars these rear lots. Sheds, trash, wildly growing weeds and vines combine to form an unwelcome impression. The present conditions must be corrected if the downtown area is to retain and improve its commercial vitality.

The recommended improvements are neither ostentatious nor grandiosely conceived. They are the initial steps of a total downtown renovation. The next

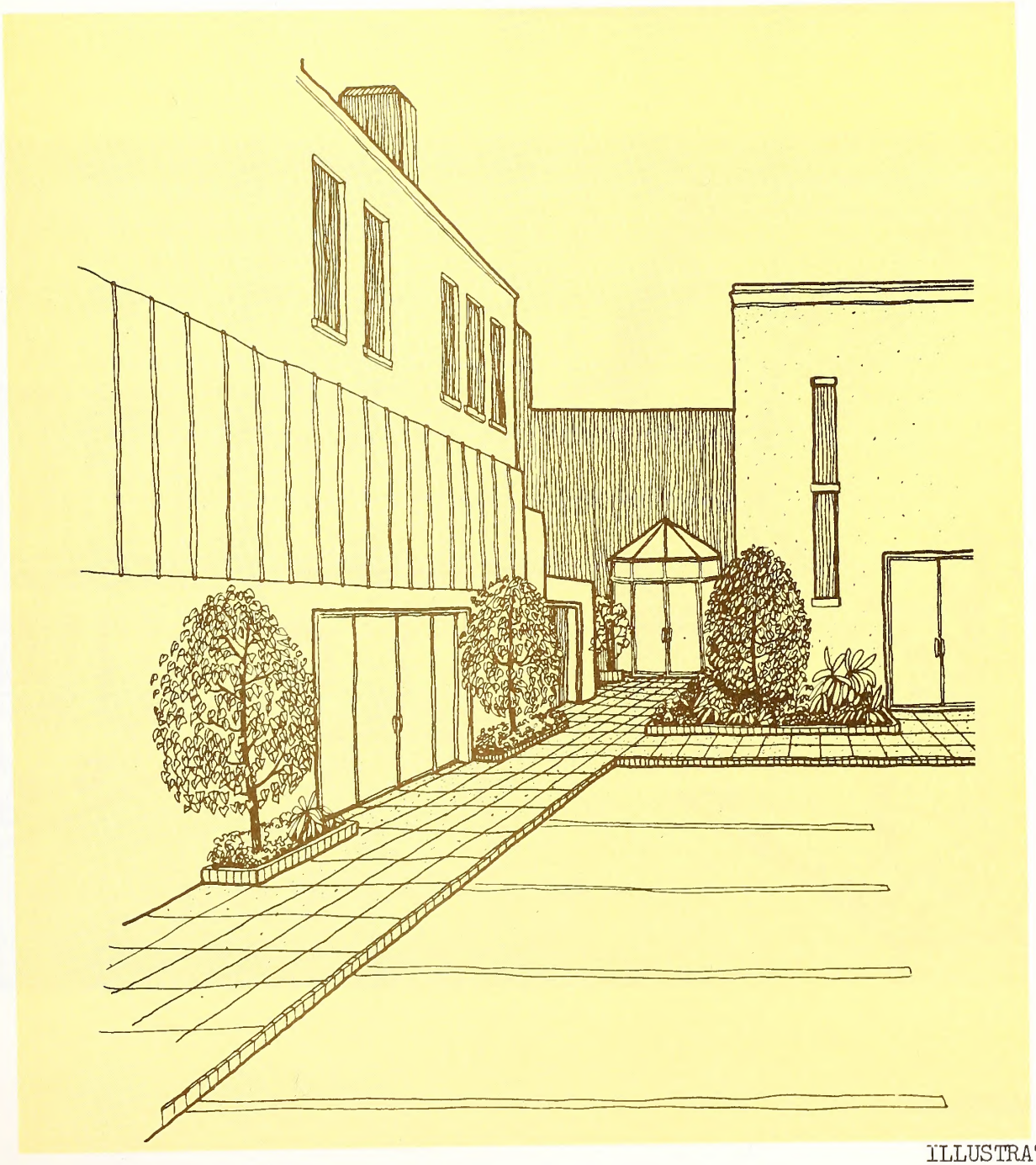


ILLUSTRATION 5

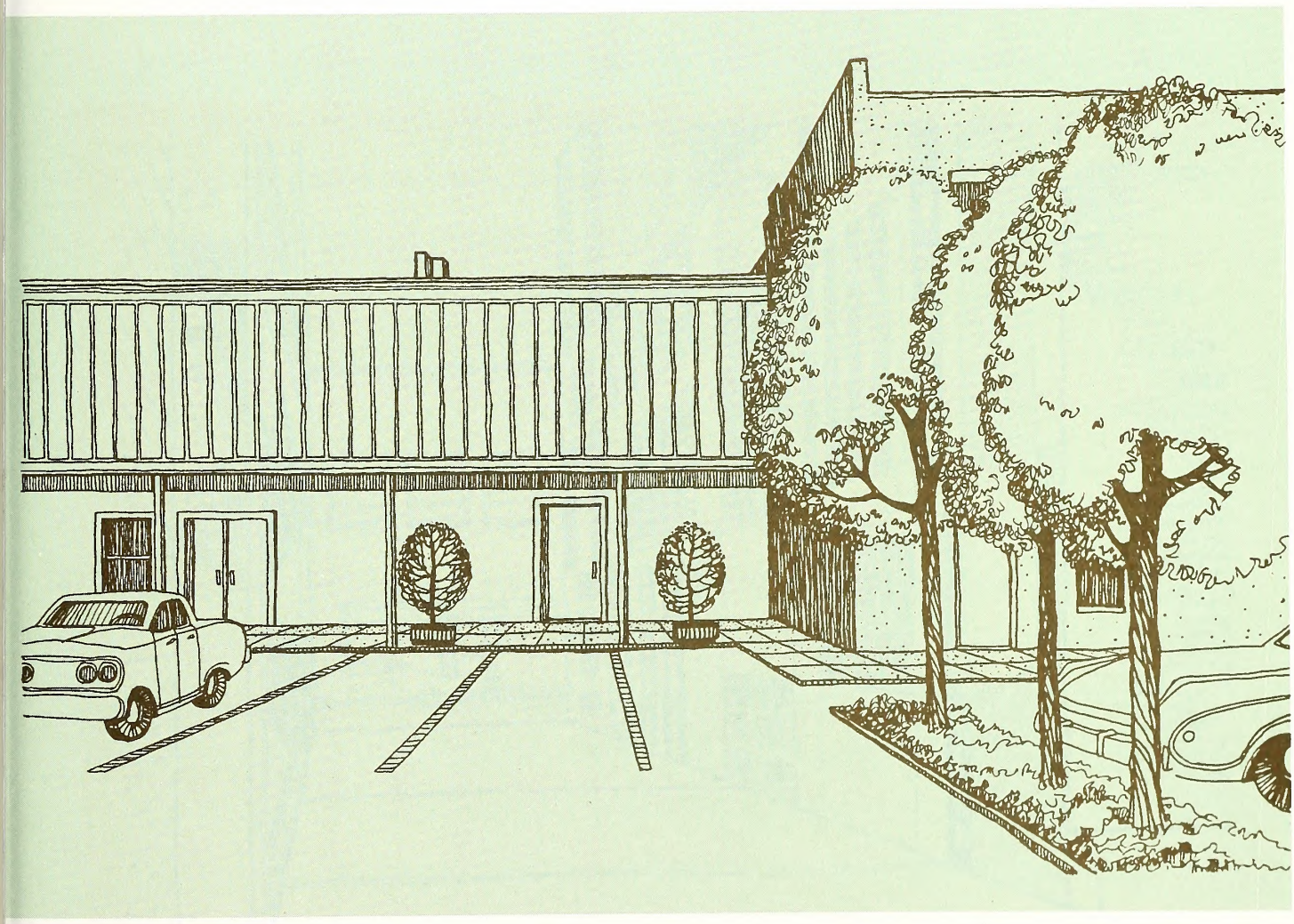
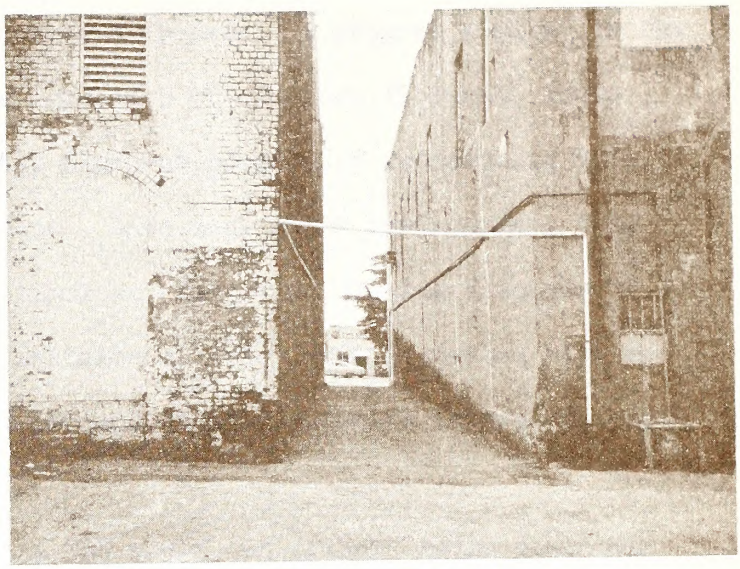


ILLUSTRATION 6



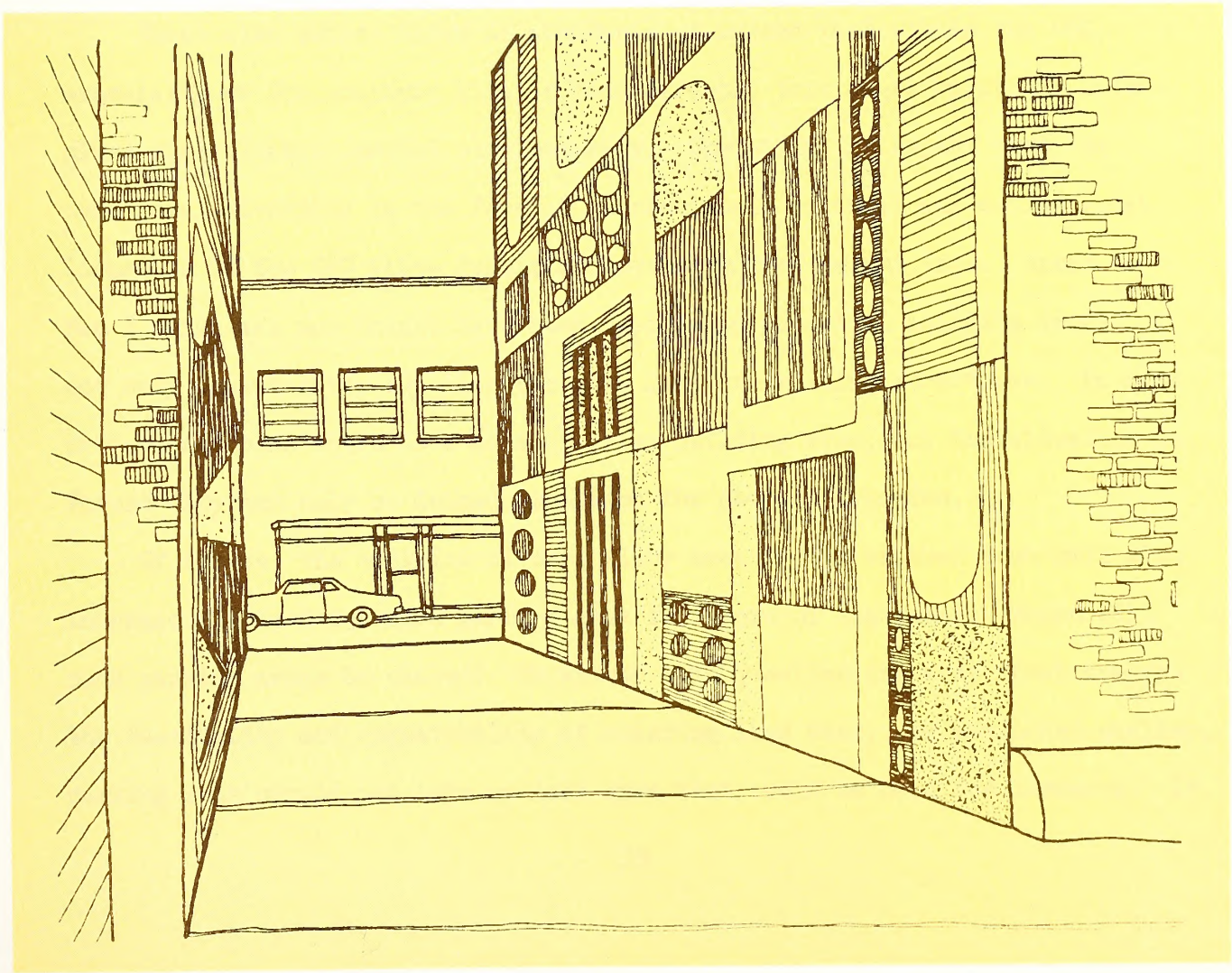


ILLUSTRATION 7

stages of the total program will be more elaborate. A program similar to the one suggested was undertaken by the merchants of downtown Florence, South Carolina. They developed a privately financed program of redesigning both the front and rear of their properties. Like many other businessmen, they believed storefronts were the most important factor in drawing shoppers to their stores. This proved to be a mistaken belief. When presented with an alternative entrance, as many as 85 percent of all customers entered through the rear entrance.

By developing the rear lots, the CBD would, in effect, bring downtown one of the basic features of a shopping center. That is, potential customers would be able to park very near the store where they intended to shop. The added convenience would greatly enhance the shoppers' propensity to return.

There also exists today an abundance of unused land within the CBD, especially on the southern side of Main Street. This unuse harmfully undermines the valuable central city property. Certainly the urgent need for commercial diversity in the form of recreational, cultural and eating establishments in the CBD alone justifies development of vacant land. Areas on Map 4 which are now vacant have been designated potential building areas, not only vacant lots, but also the rear lots of existing structures. In many cities and towns there is a lack of prime building area, but the situation in Forest City can only be deemed excellent for new construction.

Of course, the addition of more floor area in the central town will also increase the need for more parking area for users of that area. Where will such parking areas be placed? To answer this question one must first analyze the feasibility and compatibility of existing land uses. As mentioned earlier, parking lots should not take up land area that could be used for commerce. It

is also true that areas of open storage of vehicles are incompatible land uses within an area meant for high density use. The town maintenance yard is one example of incompatibility. Here a tremendous amount of land is being used for placement of heavy equipment when the land is much more suitable for commerce or the support of commerce through parking facilities. New and used car lots are also out of place in the CBD. Approximately 37,500 square feet of prime commercial area in the CBD is taken up by open storage of new, used and junked cars. Car agencies more realistically belong in highway business districts. They cater to areas of high traffic circulation on thoroughfares that can handle the extra traffic created by their use, and where the dealerships can provide adequate parking, access and egress.

It is the recommendation of this report: 1) that parking and storage of town vehicles and equipment be relocated to areas of less commercial importance (town property feasible for such storage exists within view of the present site, along Trade Street); 2) that areas in the CBD presently used for display of new and used cars, and storage of dilapidated cars be transformed into more feasible commercial use. As dead spaces in the CBD are built up, the added floor spaces increases the need for parking. Automobile lots are presently located on land ideal for peripheral off-street parking.

Main Street

East and West Main Streets should become more pedestrian oriented. With adequate space for customer parking potentially available in the peripheral parking lots provided by the Forest City Merchants Association and other customer parking lots, the elimination of on-street parking on East and West Main Streets is quite feasible.

There are 145 designated public parking spaces on East and West Main Streets. With 167 potential parking spaces in the Merchants Association lot on Young Street alone, certainly no shortage of parking spaces would result. What would exist is a more pedestrian-oriented CBD with off-street peripheral parking. Without the mad rush on Main Street to find parking spaces, less traffic congestion, less traffic hazards and more room for pedestrian movement would result.

With general improvements to existing off-street parking lots within Forest City's central business district, the parking situation could become a major asset. The parking area already exists to enable shoppers to park conveniently off of the busy streets; thus eliminating much traffic congestion. Specific recommendations are as follows:

(1) Eliminate on-street parking on East and West Main Streets;

(2) Improve existing off-street customer parking lots through paving, landscaping, adequate lighting and designating parking spaces of 200 square feet each. This action would more than facilitate those cars prevented from parking on the Main Streets.

Utilizing the six free customer parking lots that the Forest City Merchants Association has provided, has been and will continue to be a tremendous asset for shoppers, employees, and employers in Forest City.

As East and West Main Streets become more pedestrian oriented, it will become necessary to provide the pedestrian with safe convenient access to both sides of the streets. What exists today are poorly designated walkways by which the pedestrian dashes across the street at his own risk if a break in the traffic can be found. This chance method of street crossing is both

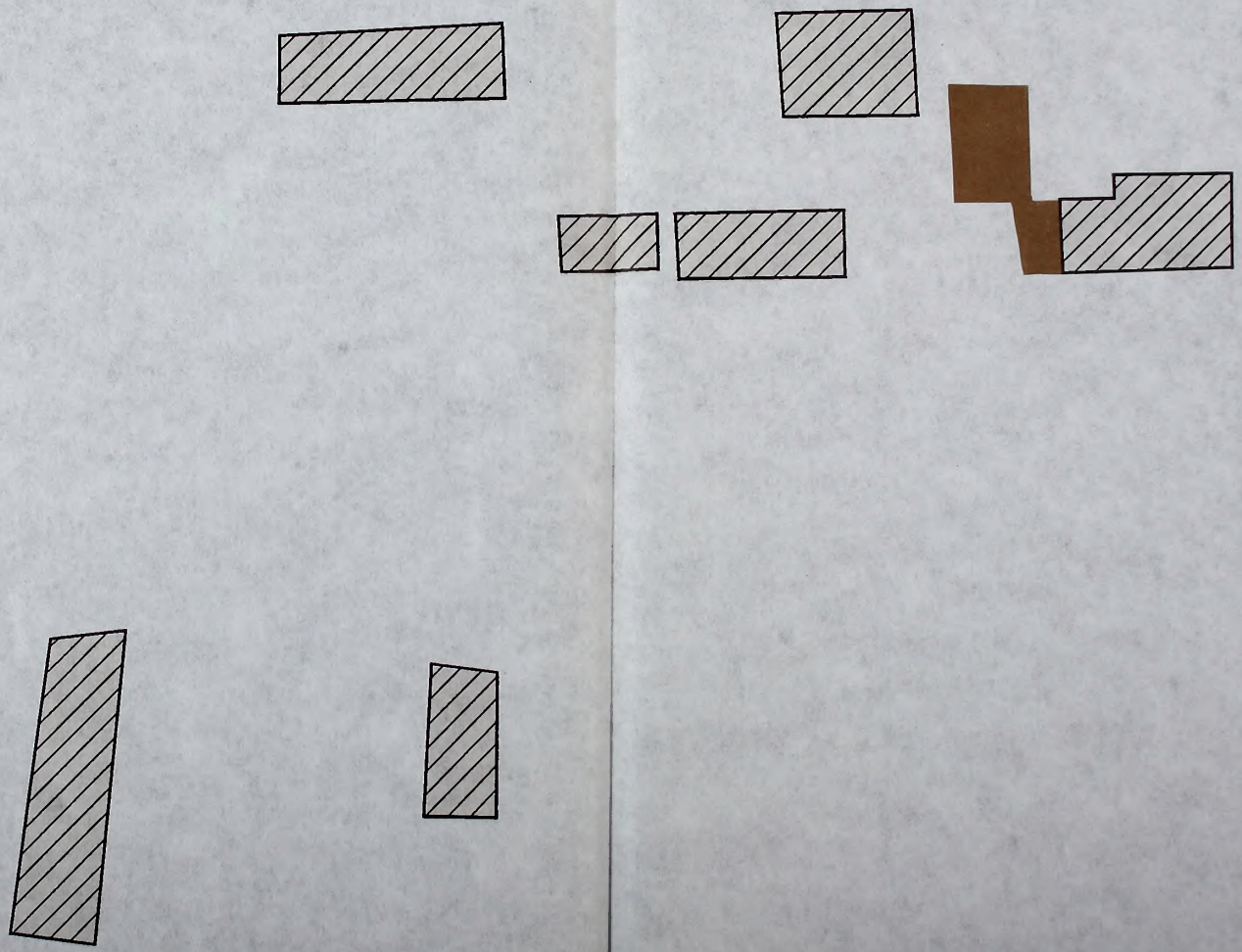
dangerous and totally unnecessary. It is the recommendation of this report that: 1) Pedestrian street crossings be strategically located and well defined with attractive paint or cobblestone type material; 2) That pedestrian operated signal lights be installed at all major intersections.

PARKING OVERLAY

LEGEND

PUBLIC PARKING

MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION PARKING



FOREST CITY C.B.D. LONG RANGE POTENTIAL LAND USE MAP

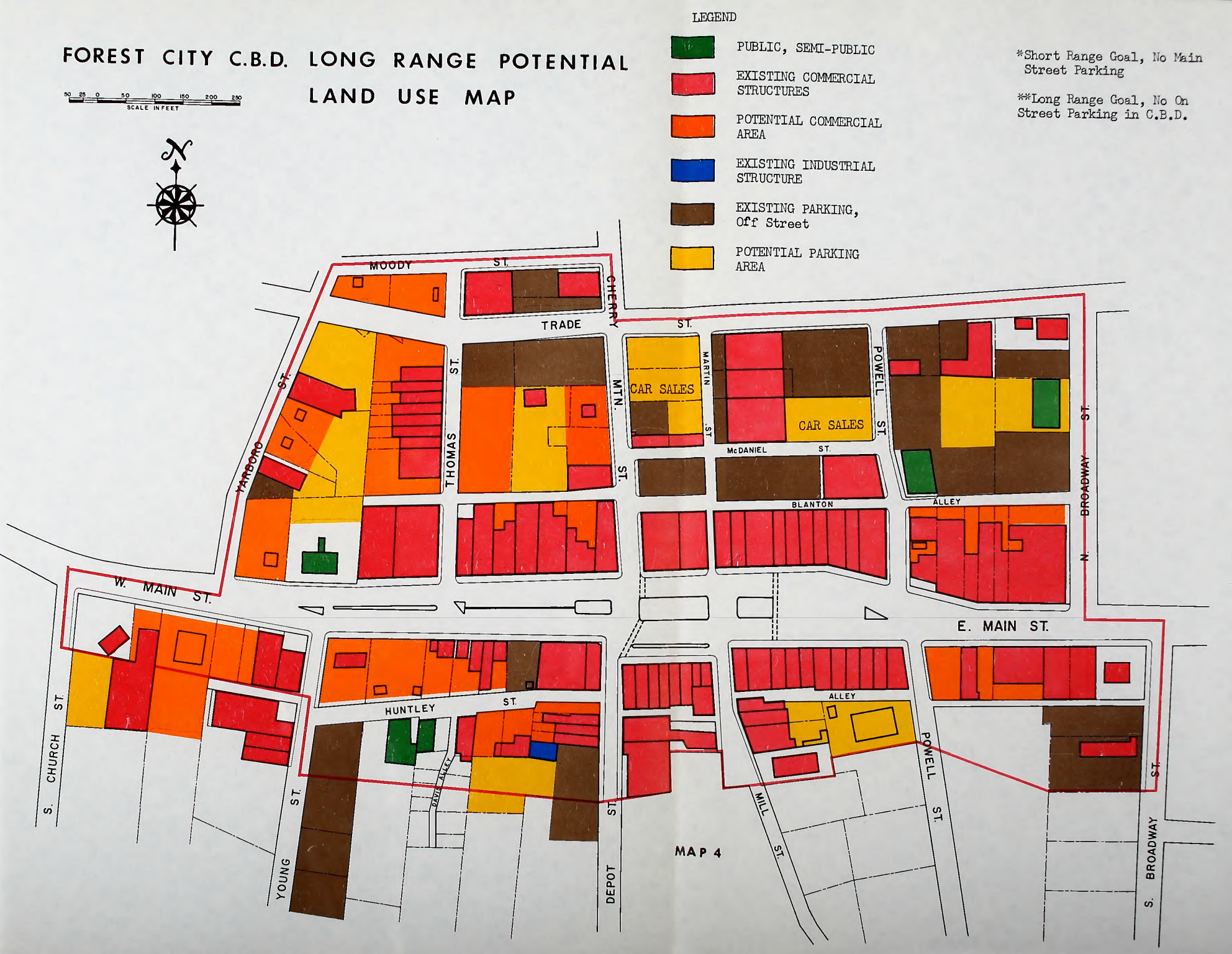
50 25 0 50 100 150 200 250
SCALE IN FEET

LEGEND

- PUBLIC, SEMI-PUBLIC
- EXISTING COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES
- POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL AREA
- EXISTING INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE
- EXISTING PARKING, Off Street
- POTENTIAL PARKING AREA

*Short Range Goal, No Main Street Parking

**Long Range Goal, No On Street Parking in C.B.D.



MAP 4

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTATION

It is not the intention of this study to provide a grand design or architectural rendering by which the Forest City CBD can be patterned. The true purpose of this study is to provide an intensive land use analysis of the inner town, and to provide a basis by which concerned people can initiate realistic efforts toward improving Forest City's downtown appearance and economy.

If physical redesign and visual improvements are the goals to be pursued, then it will be necessary for those initiating the efforts to retain an architect in order to obtain professional input. It should be the task of qualified engineers in providing technical analysis and plans for physical implementation.

Concerned citizens, both individuals and groups along with town governmental bodies, are the most important factors in relation to CBD improvements. It will take diligent efforts by such people in order to obtain support for funding and implementation of desired goals.

With the recent cuts in federal redevelopment related programs such as urban renewal, model cities and pilot cities, the best source of funding would be the Small Business Administration. This agency can guarantee commercial bank loans, make direct loans and provide direction for local merchants.

In order to secure loans or guarantees from the Small Business Administration, a Local Development Company must be formed with corporation status. This agency must be made up of 25 or more citizens of the area and operate on either a profit or nonprofit basis.

The best conceived plans are worthless if they are not implemented. The following organizational framework provides a vehicle whereby paper plans may be transformed into a tangible reality. The framework provides for active citizen participation and allows a broad degree of flexibility in financial and aesthetic considerations.

Basically, the Local Development Company (LDC) will:

(1) Develop and maintain the central business district as the primary focal point of trade, commerce, recreation and cultural activities in Forest City's trade area.

(2) Enlist the active interest and financial support of individuals, firms and corporations, and businesses who are concerned about the development and improvement of the downtown area. In particular, the support of property owners and tenants will be actively sought.

(3) Collaborate and cooperate with public agencies, federal, state, and municipal governmental, especially with officials of Forest City and Rutherford County, the Planning Board, and other improvements associations, including the Forest City Chamber of Commerce.

(4) Acquire by purchase or otherwise hold, deal in, and dispose of such real and personal property as may be necessary for the purpose of the company.

(5) To borrow or raise monies for any of the purposes of the LDC, from time to time, with acceptable limits as to amount, to draw, make, accept, endorse, execute and issue promissory notes, drafts, bonds, and other negotiable or nonnegotiable instruments of indebtedness for any of the purposes of the LDC, and to secure the payment of any

pledge, conveyance or assignment in trust of any of the property of the company, and to sell or otherwise dispose of such bonds or other obligations of the LDC for its corporation purposes.

(6) To make, enter into and perform contracts of every sort and kind with any person, firm, association, corporation, whether they be private, public, or governmental.

(7) To promote conditions conducive to the economic and cultural good of the entire community with particular reference to the central business district. This goal is shared with the Forward Forest City Program of the Chamber of Commerce.

These, then, outline the demands that will be placed on the LDC. But, how is the LDC initially organized? Too often this has been a stumbling block for many well-intentioned development groups. The Small Business Administration provides a workable program for establishing such a Local Development Company (LDC).

The enabling legislation for the SBA (Sect. 502) outlines the procedure a local group would follow to obtain SBA assistance. Specifically, to secure a 502 loan the community must have an active LDC (examples of charters and by-laws will be furnished by the SBA) and a qualified small business concern that will be the user of the facilities. The exact contract between the SBA, the LDC, and the small business will vary with the circumstances of the situation. The general framework within which a loan is negotiated is: The LDC will furnish a minor part of the total funds of the project. The balance will come from either the SBA directly or private sources. These may be in the form of a participation with SBA or guaranteed by SBA. Details of the 502 financing program may be outlined as:

(1) Borrower

Section 502 of the Small Business Investment Act authorizes SBA to lend funds to an eligible local development company for the benefit of a specific eligible small business concern. The funds must be used for land, buildings, machinery and equipment.

Communities in nearly every state have learned the value of using SBA's Local Development Company loans, known generally as the "502" program, to diversify their economy, create new jobs, and stimulate business activity. The program is used to assist both existing businesses or new industry coming into the community.

This program is based on the principle that each community bears a major responsibility for its own economic growth and health. It is authorized under Section 502 of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, as amended.

The Local Development Company (LDC) itself borrows from SBA. This corporation is easy to form, it being a local corporation (profit or nonprofit) usually owned by 25 or more stockholders or members of whom at least 75 percent reside in the community. In many instances, these local development corporations have been formed before specific small businesses have needed assistance, and have been available to help when the needs arose.

(2) The local development company's required injection varies according to the size of the community in which the project would be located. The size of the community and corresponding local development company injection required would be as follows:

A. Minimum LDC Injection Per Project:

(1) Size of Community	LDC's Injection
0 to 5,500	10%

5,501 to 10,000	15%
10,001 and over	20%

(2) The LDC's area of operation and the location of the SBC must be the same for the purposes of determining the minimum LDC's percentage of injection.

(3) In larger cities or in some counties, if the small business to be assisted is located in certain "Depressed Areas" or "High Unemployment Areas," then the minimum 10 percent LDC injection may be allowed regardless of the size of the community and the local development company's area of operation.

(4) In shopping center projects, the small business concerns themselves may supply 75 percent of the needed LDC injection.

(3) Small Business Concern to be Assisted by the LDC

A. Some Types of Eligible Small Businesses:

(1) Manufacturing

(2) Distributors

(3) Nursing Homes

(4) Medical Clinics

(5) Shopping Centers

(6) Motels

(7) Professional Buildings

(8) Recreational Projects

(9) Summer Camps

(10) Automobile Dealers

(11) Parking Facilities

(12) Funeral Homes

B. Size Standards for Small Business Concerns (all types)

(Note - all subsidiaries and affiliates must be included)

(1) Total assets not over $5,000,000; Net Worth not over $2,500,000; Net Profit after taxes for past two fiscal years not over $250,000 (average).

(2) Number of employees can be up to 1,000 depending upon product manufactured.

If the small business concern can qualify under either (1) or (2) above, it would be eligible.

The local development corporation may borrow the funds from SBA and build or acquire land, buildings or equipment for the use of the Small Business Concern to be assisted (SBC). These facilities may be leased to the SBC with a purchase option or the LDC may re-lend the funds to the small business concern who may build and own the building or purchase machinery itself with a mortgage arrangement with the LDC. The LDC assigns this mortgage to SBA as its primary collateral.

(4) Loan Terms

The LDC is limited at present to $1,000,000 during any one fiscal year for loans to small business concerns.

Maximum Loan Amount--Statutory limitation of $350,000 to any one small business. Present policy is $350,000 or 40 percent to 50 percent of the total project cost, whichever is the lesser. Where LDC required injection is 10 percent, SBA loan can be 50 percent of Project Cost. In certain situations, SBA loan amount can be higher.

Interest Rate - 5½%

Maximum Maturity - Real Estate - 25 years

Machinery - 12 years

(5) Other Pertinent Factors

To encourage private lenders to have a larger share in local projects, SBA may now make a second mortgage loan, if the local lender will lend a certain percent or more of the project costs, in communities as outlined below:

A. First Mortgage Plan:

(1)

Size of Community	Allowed First Mortgage Money
0 to 10,000	20%
10,001 to 25,000	25%
25,001 to 50,000	30%
50,001 or over	40%

(2) The location of the SBC shall determine the percentage of allowable First Mortgage Money.

If a local lender will furnish the full 80 percent SBA may guarantee up to 90 percent (or up to $350,000) of the loan to be made by the local lender to the LDC.

The local development company working with the Small Business Administration and local businessmen can provide a means whereby the Central Business District can be truly revitalized.

To provide funds for the construction or the improvement of parking areas, House Bill 333 of the General Assembly of North Carolina allows the

best approach. The new bill becoming effective July 1, 1973 allows municipalities to levy property taxes for any purpose for which the town is authorized by its charter to appropriate money. The tax levy must be approved by a vote of the people. This law allows an effective tax rate of up to $1.50 per $100 appraised value of the property. This law specifically allows taxation for, among other items, off-street parking lots and garages for the storage of motor vehicles.

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rate these items in Forest City's downtown.

Rate them on a scale of from 1 (excellent) through 4 (poor).

		Average Rating*
1.	Off-street parking	3
2.	Traffic flow	3
3.	Street lighting	1
4.	Sidewalks	2
5.	On-street parking	3
6.	Exterior appearance of stores	2
7.	Interior appearance of stores	2
8.	Quality of merchandise	3
9.	Selection of merchandise	3
10.	Store hours	2
11.	Entertainment and recreation facilities	4
12.	Eating establishments	4
13.	Cultural activities	4

Please answer Yes or No:

1. Do you do most of your shopping in downtown Forest City?
   Yes 41 No 59

2. Would you walk to a place to shop if you had to park over a block away? Yes 80 No 20

3. Do you feel that the downtown merchants would benefit if the area was revitalized? Yes 80 No 20

* In questions 1 - 13, citizens were asked to rate each item on a basis of 1 through 4 with 1 being excellent and 4 being poor.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

LAND USE ANALYSIS

FOREST CITY, NORTH CAROLINA

The following is submitted to meet Federal requirements under Section 4-6a of the HUD Handbook, and State requirements as defined in the North Carolina Environmental Policy Act (GS 113A).

ABSTRACT. This Central Business District study is the result of an in-depth analysis of building condition, building uses, parking conditions, and citizens' opinions. Recommendations are made for enhancing the appearance and commercial vitality of downtown Forest City. This study also recommends tools of implementation.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT? No adverse effects upon the environment are anticipated if any of the proposals are implemented. In fact, most of the proposals should have beneficial effects on the environment. However, the environmental impact of individual projects cannot be realistically assessed until actual project planning and design occurs.

ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS? None are anticipated.

ALTERNATIVES TO PROPOSED PLANS? The proposed projects and plans are flexible. However, no alternatives are scheduled at this time. Natural alternative selections or variations would be made if the principal plan or plans are abandoned.

RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM TO LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON ENVIRONMENT? The project plans include both immediate and future area needs, including large and small

items, thus, some of the proposed projects, if implemented, will have a very short-term effect on the environment while others being larger in scope will effect the environment over a longer time period.